AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please cancel the first full paragraph on page 10 of the specification and replace it with the paragraph below.

-- Like HBsAg, the hepatitis B core antigen (HBcAg), ~~HBcAg~~ is a particulate protein derived from the hepatitis B virus that has been proposed as a carrier for heterologous epitopes. The relative immunogenicity of HBsAg (HBs) has been compared with ~~HbcAg~~ HBcAg (HBc), and the ability of each to evoke immune responses in different genetic backgrounds [Milich et al., *Science*, (1986) **234**(4782): p. 1398-1401]. These data emphasize the higher immunogenicity of HBc relative to HBs, and the universal responsiveness to HBc, irrespective of genetic background. --

Please delete the paragraph bridging pages 34 and 35 and replace it with the paragraph below.

--Domain IV contains fewer than three arginine or lysine residues, or mixtures thereof adjacent to each other. Arginine and lysines are present in the C-terminal region of HBc that extends from position 150 through the C-terminus of the native molecule. That region is sometimes referred to in the ~~are~~ art as the "protamine" or "arginine-rich" region of the molecule and is thought to bind to nucleic acids. A contemplated HBc chimer molecule and particle are substantially free of bound nucleic acids.--